



## **National Experts Available for Consultation**

*November 9-10  
Omaha, Nebraska*

### **BUILD Initiative**

**Debi Mathias** serves as Director of the QRIS National Learning Network for the BUILD Initiative. BUILD provides technical assistance and support to states in the development of comprehensive early childhood systems. Previously, Debi was Director of Early Learning Services, OCDEL, Departments of Education and Public Welfare in PA, responsible for Keystone STARS (QRIS), state Pre-K, Head Start Collaboration Office and State Head Start funding, family support programs, professional development systems and standards aligned systems. Areas of expertise include:

- Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS)
- Professional Development, Training and Technical Assistance systems

### **Center for Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes (CEELO)**

**Lori Connors-Tadros, Ph.D.** is the Senior Project Director for CEELO, funded by the U.S. Department of Education. Lori provides technical assistance to state education agencies, governor's offices, and other early learning partners across the country to build capacity to implement comprehensive and aligned early learning systems for children birth through third grade. Areas of expertise include:

- Identifying results and developing theories of action/evaluation plans to reach goals for children;
- Financing and sustaining systems/programs for children and families;
- Research and best practice to inform state policy to improve quality of teaching and learning (e.g. scaling up effective programs, revising/aligning early learning standards, quality improvement systems, eligibility policy, project management).

**Jana Martella** is the Co-Director for the CEELO. Bringing to her work more than thirty years of experience in education, a central part of her focus has been on education system and program improvement through standards-based reform and development, including her work in promoting improved opportunities in early childhood education. She holds

masters degrees from San Diego State and Johns Hopkins Universities. With the team at CEELO, Jana works with state leaders and decision-makers to achieve the following goals:

- Improve states' knowledge about and use of early childhood comprehensive assessment systems
- Enhance the use of assessment data and other information to improve program quality
- Increase the knowledge and skills of the early learning workforce
- Strengthen the alignment of birth through 3rd grade educational policies and systems
- Increase the coordination of resources and policies across statewide systems

### **Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)**

**Christine Johnson-Staub** is currently the Interim Director of Care and Early Education at CLASP. Over her 20 years in the field, Christine has developed expertise in areas of child care and early education policy including child care subsidy programs and policy, early childhood financing, system building, and state technical assistance. She has authored papers on financing comprehensive services, developmental screening, and other topics, and recently was a co-author on the guide to CCDBG implementation published jointly by NWLC and CLASP. Areas of expertise include:

- Financing strategies; braiding funding
- Building stronger connections with health, mental health, child welfare, home visiting, and family support services
- QRIS/TQRIS design
- CCDF policy and implementation

### **Center on the Developing Child**

**Gillian Najarian** is Managing Director and was among the Center's founders in July 2006. She sets the direction for the senior leadership team and oversees Center-wide governance issues, including strategic planning and resource development around all new initiatives. She has been part of the team to conceptualize and steward Frontiers of Innovation, the Center's R&D Platform to drive the design of intervention strategies grounded in scientific research that produce breakthrough outcomes for children facing adversity. She's currently leading the launch team to bring FOI to Latin America, beginning with innovation clusters in Brazil and Mexico. Areas of expertise include:

- Using the science of child development to support innovation in policy and practice

### **Child Trends**

**Kathryn Tout** co-directs Early Childhood Research at Child Trends. She is the project director for evaluations of Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) in Minnesota and New Mexico. Through a contract with the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE), Kathryn co-directs the Quality Initiatives Research and Evaluation Consortium (INQUIRE) – a community of researchers that produces reports and materials to support

the design, implementation and evaluation of quality improvement efforts in early care and education. In addition to QRIS and quality improvement strategies, Kathryn has expertise in the areas of:

- Professional development for the early childhood workforce
- Parents' search and decision-making about early care and education
- Children's development and school readiness
- Translation of research for policymakers and practitioners
- Convening collaborative research partnerships

**Frank Walter** is vice president of strategic communications. He oversees the research and communications team in support of the Alliance for Early Success, including co-leading the communications working group on early childhood communications. Mr. Walter also directs Child Trends communications program including message development, media relations, social media, partner outreach, and graphic and digital communications. He recently led the successful launch of the Child Trends Hispanic Institute, and directed communications for reports on the risks facing young children in military families, state child welfare policies for young children, infants and toddlers, and adverse childhood experiences. He has provided communications consulting to such organizations as Raising A Reader, America's Promise Alliance, Reading Is Fundamental, and Share Our Strength. He is on the communications advisory council for the Fatherhood Research and Practice Network and leads Child Trends' communications work for the Office of Adolescent Health. Areas of expertise include:

- Strategic communications planning and messaging
- Policy communications
- Media relations, social media
- Partnership development

### **Committee for Economic Development (CED)**

**Mike Petro** is the Executive Vice President of CED where he is responsible for overseeing and directing all functions of CED including development, communications, and the research agenda. Mr. Petro supervises a staff of 20 individuals and reports to some 200 CED Trustees throughout the country. He is responsible for connecting CED's policy projects and activities to the business community, government officials, and members of the media around the economic benefits of investing in early education. Areas of expertise include:

- Building business coalitions around early childhood programs
- Speaking on panels and at forums around how to engage the business community in ECE
- Liaison between business groups and advocacy community

**Cindy Cisneros** is the Vice President of Education Programs responsible for leading CED's comprehensive portfolio that covers the continuum from early education to postsecondary issues. She manages the day-to-day project work for CED's state-based efforts in early education and related research. Prior to working at CED, Ms. Cisneros served as the

Director of Stakeholder Engagement at Public Education Network and as a Principal Research Analyst at the American Institutes for Research. Areas of expertise include:

- Education and business stakeholder engagement
- Strategic planning, policy, and research

**Grace Reef** is the Committee for Economic Development's Senior Outreach Consultant working to engage the business community in calling for quality child care and early learning settings. Prior to working with CED, Ms. Reef served as Chief of Policy and Evaluation for Child Care Aware of America and as U.S. Senate Staff Director for the HELP Subcommittee on Children. Areas of expertise include:

- ECE policy analysis, grassroots advocacy strategies, and mobilization
- State & federal early learning policy alignment and linkages
- CCDBG implementation

### **Council for a Strong America**

**David Kass** serves as the President of the Council for a Strong America, the nonprofit parent of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, Mission: Readiness, Shepherding the Next Generation, ReadyNation, and Champions for America's Future, where he directs their overall operations. Previously, David served as deputy assistant secretary for legislation at the U.S. Department of Housing, managing the agency's Congressional affairs office, and also worked on children's issues as a staff person on Capitol Hill and for several nonprofits.

Areas of expertise include:

- Building high-performing advisory councils: strategic planning
- Building high-performing advisory councils: developing members' capacity as policy leaders
- Cultivating unlikely messengers in support of high quality early care and education

**Jeff Kirsch** is a vice president of the Council for a Strong America (CSA), the umbrella organization over five organizations of "unexpected messengers": Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, Mission: Readiness, ReadyNation, Shepherding the Next Generation, and Champions for America's Future. He is responsible for coordinating the organizations' state policy work with allies. Prior to joining CSA, he was Deputy Director and Field Director of the health advocacy group, Families USA; and before that was field director and executive director of the anti-hunger group, FRAC. Areas of expertise include:

- Advocacy strategy and tactics
- Recruiting and engaging "unexpected messengers" into policy advocacy
- Organizational development and planning

### **Council of Chief State School Officers**

**Tom Schultz** is Project Director for Early Childhood Initiatives at CCSSO where he works with states to improve learning opportunities and outcomes for young children. Prior to joining the Council, Dr. Schultz worked at the Pew Charitable Trusts and coauthored Taking Stock: Assessing and Improving Early Childhood Learning and Program Quality, based on

the work of the National Early Childhood Accountability Task Force. From 1995-2005 he served as a senior manager in the Head Start Bureau, where he led the development of initiatives in the areas of child assessment, program evaluation, professional development and collaboration with other early care and education programs. Areas of expertise include:

- Assessment: early childhood (0-5) and Kindergarten entry assessment
- Coordinated ECE data systems
- Linkages to K-3
- Family engagement
- Linking Head Start with state initiatives and policies

### **Early Childhood Data Collaborative (ECDC)**

**Carlise King** is Executive Director of ECDC at Child Trends. She led ECDC's national survey of states' early care and education data systems and works closely with stakeholders on how coordinated data systems can answer key policy questions to support data-driven decision-making. Ms. King directs the delivery of policy consultation and strategic communications that promote the development, implementation, and use of early childhood data systems. The ECDC is committed to helping state policymakers and practitioners advance policies and practice that support the use data to improve the quality of ECE programs and the workforce, increase access to high quality ECE programs and ultimately improve child outcomes. Ms. King has over 15 years of experience conducting state and national level research on early childhood issues and examining the impact of state and federal policies on parents' access to child care services, licensed child care supply, child care costs, and the child care workforce. Areas of expertise include:

- Using administrative data to inform local, state, and federal early childhood policies
- State coordinated, longitudinal and improvement-driven ECE data systems
- Communicating to policymakers about early childhood data systems development

### **Education Commission of the States (ECS)**

**Bruce Atchison** is the Executive Director of Policy at ECS and directs the Early Learning Institute. He brings more than 30 years of experience working in the field of early learning and education policy. He was Chief of Staff for Colorado's Lt. Gov. and a member of Governor Ritter's cabinet, served as the Executive Vice President of the state's child advocacy organization for eight years, worked in Governor Romer's policy office as the Head Start State Collaboration Director and worked as the Executive Director of the Early Learning Partnership focused on pre-K to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade alignment. Bruce has worked for Denver Public Schools as the Executive Director of the Family Resource Schools, was Director of the City of Boulder's Children's Services Division and was the President and CEO of a private non-profit child care/Pre-K program. Areas of expertise include:

- Linking policy makers to policy initiatives
- Early childhood governance
- K-3

- Systems building across domains
- Early childhood policy, birth to age eight across states
- Pre-K – K transitions
- Pre-K Funding and strategies
- Early Learning and Developmental Guidelines/Common core

### **First Five Years Fund**

**Kris Perry** is the executive director of the FFYF. FFYF works in a bipartisan manner with policymakers, experts, business leaders and advocates to advance federal investment in quality early childhood education for disadvantaged children from birth to age five. Previously, Kris served as Executive Director of First 5 California, fostering their emergence as one of the most well-known and respected advocates for early childhood development on the state and national levels. Prior to that, Kris served as Executive Director of First 5 San Mateo County. Over the course of her career she has served in many state appointments, including co-chair of the California State Early Learning Advisory Council. Areas of expertise include:

- ECE policy and advocacy strategies and tactics
- State/federal early learning policy linkages
- Communications strategies and effective messaging frameworks
- Coalition building

### **Frontera Strategies**

**Jennifer Esterline** is a senior consultant with Frontera Strategy, an Austin-based public affairs firm that provides high quality consulting services to nonprofits, coalitions, and foundations. Jennifer brings a background in policy, philanthropy, and public service to Frontera Strategy. Jennifer started her career in the Office of Governor George W. Bush and has spent the last decade building connections between public officials, foundations, and nonprofit organizations. Jennifer has served as the head of a private foundation and built the largest consortium of Texas foundations to ever work together on public policy. Areas of expertise include:

- Legislative advocacy and lobbying
- Resource development and fundraising
- Coalition building and coalition support
- Strategic grantmaking for effective advocacy campaigns
- Pre-K – 12 education

**Jason Sabo** is the founder of Frontera Strategy, an Austin-based public affairs firm dedicated to helping nonprofits and foundations achieve clear public policy goals. Jason has led and assisted efforts to pass legislation and secure appropriations at state capitols across the country for more than a decade. Frontera Strategy focuses on connecting committed philanthropists and effective advocates to improve policies for children and families. Prior to launching Frontera, Jason worked at the United Way of Texas and at a public policy think tank. Areas of expertise include:

- Legislative advocacy and lobbying

- Policy analysis and political strategy
- Communications and media strategy
- Community organizing and mobilization
- Strategic grantmaking for effective advocacy campaigns
- Early childhood policy

### **National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP)**

**Carrie Hanlon** is a program manager at NASHP, a non-profit, nonpartisan organization that supports states in advancing workable health policy solutions. Carrie studies state policies designed to improve the quality of health care, with a focus on Medicaid, maternal and child health, early childhood, and racial and ethnic health disparities. She staffed NASHP's Assuring Better Child Health and Development (ABCD) III project, through which states tested ways to improve care coordination for Medicaid-eligible children with or at risk of developmental delay. Areas of expertise include:

- Developmental screening, referral, and care coordination (Medicaid, mental health, home visiting)
- Medicaid payment and delivery strategies that support children's health
- Health equity in early childhood
- State health policy
- Aligning state health care reform and early learning system reform

### **NALEO Education Fund**

**Dr. Rosita Ramirez** is Director of Constituency Services for the Education Portfolio for the National Association of Latino Elected & Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund. NALEO Educational Fund is a nonprofit organization that facilitates full Latino participation in the American political process, from citizenship to public service. In this capacity, she is primarily responsible for the overall design, implementation and development of education policy institutes and governance training opportunities within the organization for Latino elected officials across the United States. Areas of expertise include:

- Governance
- English language learners
- Common Core State Standards
- Policy alignment between the early years, K-12, and postsecondary education

### **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)**

**Rhian Evans Allvin**, executive director since 2013, is responsible for guiding the strategic direction of the organization as well as overseeing the daily operations. With more than 70,000 members and 300 Affiliate components across the United States, NAEYC serves as the leading voice on behalf of young children and early childhood educators. Before joining NAEYC, Rhian was a guiding force in Arizona's early childhood movement for more than 15 years. In 2006 she co-wrote the citizen's ballot initiative that created First Things First (FTF) which set aside Arizona's tobacco tax monies for children birth to five and created a state agency whose purpose is to ensure all Arizona children start kindergarten prepared

to be successful in school and in life. She was then appointed to FTF's state board, where she served for four years before resigning to become the organization's chief executive officer (CEO). Areas of expertise include:

- Public policy and advocacy
- Government relations
- Early childhood financing
- Executive leadership and association management
- Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS)

**Alison Lutton** is Senior Advisor for the Early Childhood Workforce Systems Initiative at NAEYC. She provides leadership and technical assistance to state professional development (PD) stakeholders on policies and strategic planning for integrated or aligned, cross-sector early childhood PD systems. Alison has served as NAEYC's State Technical Assistance Specialist for the Center for Professional Development and Workforce Initiatives funded by the Office of Child Care and Office of Head Start; Senior Higher Education Specialist; and Director for Higher Education Accreditation, Standards, and Program Support. She is the editor of the 2012 NAEYC publication "Advancing the Early Childhood Profession: NAEYC Standards and Guidelines for Professional Development." Areas of expertise include:

- Strategic planning and evaluation of state PD systems
- Professional standards, competencies and credentials for the 0-8 workforce
- Competency based training and education
- Cross sector career pathways, training approval, and credential portability for the child care, Head Start and P-3 workforce
- Higher education systems, partnerships, professional standards, and accreditation

**Marica Cox Mitchell** is Deputy Executive Director for Early Learning Systems. In this capacity, she is responsible for advancing NAEYC's products and initiatives related to applied research, public policy and advocacy, higher education accreditation, and accreditation for programs serving young children. Marica has over 16 years of diverse experiences in the early childhood education field. She began her professional journey working in early learning programs as a teacher and curriculum specialist. She previously served in management positions at NAEYC, the District of Columbia's Office of the State Superintendent of Education, and the District of Columbia Public Schools.

- Areas of expertise include:
- Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS)
- Higher Education Accreditation and Support
- Professional Development Systems
- Early Learning Policy

### **National Center for Children in Poverty (NCCP)**

**Sheila Smith**, Ph.D. directs the early childhood team at NCCP, and has extensive knowledge about policies that can benefit low-income children. She has experience in program/policy development and research in the areas of: quality early childhood education, Quality Rating



Improvement Systems, parent involvement, and early childhood mental health. Areas of expertise include:

- Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS): standards focused on early learning; effective professional development and on-site TA/coaching.
- Supporting children's early literacy, language development, social-emotional competence, positive approaches to learning in Pre-3
- Early childhood mental health
- English language learners
- Family Engagement: parent involvement

### **National Conference of State Legislatures**

**Robyn Lipkowitz** is a Program Director for the Children & Families Program at the National Conference of State Legislatures in Denver, CO. She coordinates NCSL's work across an array of state policy issues related to child care and early education. Prior to joining NCSL she managed the Utah Department of Health's Office of Home Visiting administering the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) grant program and building a home visiting system across the state. Ms. Lipkowitz also worked as a policy analyst for Voices for Utah Children with a focus on early care and education policy. Areas of expertise include:

- Early care and education legislative policy
- Home visiting
- Financing strategies
- Pre-kindergarten
- Child care subsidy and quality
- State ECE governance and coordination

**Julie Poppe** is a Program Manager for the early care and education project in the Children and Families Program at the National Conference of State Legislatures in Denver, Colo. She provides a range of informational and policy services to state legislators and legislative staff through technical assistance, publications, legislative educational presentations and research on issues related to early care and education. Ms. Poppe has authored and co-authored publications on topics including state early childhood care and education financing and budgeting, preschool, children's mental health services, and infant and toddler development and care. Areas of expertise include:

- Early care and education legislative policy
- Financing strategies
- Infant and toddler
- Pre-kindergarten
- Governance
- Child care subsidy and quality

### **National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA)**

**Albert Wat** is a Senior Policy Analyst in the Education Division of the NGA Center for Best Practices, where he works on early childhood education issues, from birth through third grade. Most recently, his work has focused on policies regarding data systems, learning standards, assessments, and alignment between early learning policies and practices and education reform initiatives, especially those in the early elementary years. Before joining the NGA, he worked at Pre-K Now, an advocacy campaign at the Pew Center on the States. Areas of expertise include:

- Birth-to-8 policy; policy alignment between the early years and the early grades, including PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> teacher evaluation
- Kindergarten readiness assessment policies and implementation
- Embedding executive function in 0-8 policy and practice
- Financing strategies for pre-kindergarten: expanding, protecting, etc.
- Common Core standards
- Coordinated ECE data systems
- Early literacy policies

### **National Women's Law Center**

**Helen Blank** is the Director of Child Care and Early Learning at the National Women's Law Center. She led the campaign to enact the Child Care and Development Block Grant and works on federal and state funding and policy issues affecting early childhood and school-age care, and has co-authored numerous studies on these issues both at the Children's Defense Fund and NWLC. She also coordinates a state early care and education advocates' network.

Areas of expertise include:

- Governance
- Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS)
- Child care subsidy policies and data
- Prekindergarten
- Federal and State Early Learning Advocacy

### **New America**

**Laura Bornfreund** serves as Director of Early and Elementary Education Policy at New America's Education Policy Program. She has authored several New America reports including "An Ocean of Unknowns: Risks and Opportunities in Using Student Achievement Data to Evaluate PreK-3rd Grade Teachers" (2013), and "Getting in Sync: Revamping Licensing and Preparation for Teachers in Pre-K, Kindergarten, and the Early Grades" (2011), and was lead author on "Beyond Subprime Learning: Accelerating Progress in Early Education (2014). Areas of expertise include:

- Early and elementary educator preparation and development
- Full-day kindergarten and the early grades
- Federal and state policies that support states' preK-3rd and birth-to-3rd alignment

**Lisa Guernsey** is deputy director of the Education Policy Program and director of the Learning Technologies Project at [New America](#). She leads teams of writers and analysts to examine policies, tell stories, and generate ideas on new approaches to help disadvantaged students succeed. Prior to her work at New America, Lisa worked as a staff writer at The New York Times and The Chronicle of Higher Education. She has also contributed to several national publications, including The Atlantic, The Washington Post, Newsweek, Time, Slate, and USA TODAY, and she is the author of [College.Edu](#) (Octameron Associates, 1997-2010) and [Screen Time: How Electronic Media – From Baby Videos to Educational Software – Affects Your Young Child](#) (Basic Books, 2012). Her latest book, with Michael H. Levine, is [Tap, Click, Read: Growing Readers in a World of Screens](#) (Jossey-Bass, 2015). Lisa has served on several national advisory committees on early education, including the Institute of Medicine's Committee on the Science of Children Birth To Age 8 which produced the 2015 volume, Transforming the Workforce Birth to Age 8: A Unifying Foundation.

### **Ounce of Prevention Fund**

**Elliot Regenstein** is the Senior Vice President, Advocacy and Policy, coordinating the Ounce's state and national policy efforts and leading the national policy consultation practice. He served as Illinois' Director of Education Reform from 2004 to 2006. From 2004 to 2009 he was the co-chair of Illinois' Early Learning Council, and he currently serves as a co-chair of the Council's Data, Research, and Evaluation Committee. Areas of expertise include:

- Connecting federal and state policy
- Connecting early learning policy with K-12 in a birth to third grade continuum
- The role of state advisory councils
- Policy issues relating to unified early learning data systems

**Margie Wallen** is the Director of Policy Partnerships with the National Policy Team, which supports early childhood leaders in states to protect, improve and grow public and private investment, policies, and services targeted to at-risk infants, toddlers and preschoolers. Margie coordinated the work of the Illinois Early Learning Council that designed Illinois' Birth to Five Preschool for All program, has managed a variety of state initiatives to enhance access to high-quality early care and education, and worked for a decade in Illinois to advance early childhood policies that benefit at-risk children from birth to age five and their families. Areas of expertise include:

- Financing; Blending and Braiding Funding Streams
- Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships; Child Care policies
- PreK; diverse delivery
- Policy advocacy strategies and tactics
- Governance; Public Private Partnerships

### **Rhode Island KIDS COUNT**

**Elizabeth Burke Bryant** is Executive Director of Rhode Island KIDS COUNT, a children's policy organization that works to improve children's outcomes through policy, advocacy, communications, and data strategies. Areas of expertise include:

- State linkage policies that link early learning to K-3 and K-12
- Facilitating leadership and communications strategies at state level to promote full birth through 8 policy agenda across health, early learning and family support
- Using birth through 8 policies to improve reading proficiency
- Expertise with positioning Early Learning Councils as leadership body that cuts across state departments and uses a birth-8 framework
- Strategies to have all early learning programs (across all settings) in TQRIS
- Using school funding formulas as a financing strategy for funding state Pre-K and designing and expanding state Pre-K programs using mixed delivery model.

**Leanne Barrett** is Senior Policy Analyst at Rhode Island KIDS COUNT. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT has provided leadership for several national initiatives, including *Getting Ready: the 17-State National School Readiness Indicators Initiative*. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is working with the Alliance on peer-to-peer work with other state advocates on issues related to state Pre-K using mixed delivery system. Areas of expertise include:

- Infant-toddler policies
- State linkage policies that link early learning to K-3 and K-12
- Using birth through 8 policies to improve reading proficiency
- Expertise with positioning Early Learning Councils as leadership body that cuts across state departments and uses a birth-8 framework
- Strategies to have all early learning programs (across all settings) in TQRIS
- Strategies to ensure high quality state Pre-K using mixed delivery system with high quality criteria for operating state pre-K classrooms.

### **ZERO TO THREE**

**Barbara Gebhard** is the Assistant Director of Public Policy at ZERO TO THREE where she works to support states in the development of policies and systems to meet the needs of infants and toddlers. Among Barbara's former positions are Director of the Build Initiative, Deputy Director of the WV Governor's Cabinet on Children and Families, and a variety of early childhood positions in Part C, child care, and parenting education in the WV Department of Health and Human Resources. Areas of expertise include:

- Governance: state and local planning and coordinating structures, including building high-performing advisory councils
- Infant-toddler policy priorities
- Comprehensive early childhood systems
- Home visiting system and integration into the broader early childhood system

**Matthew Melmed** has been the Executive Director of ZERO TO THREE since 1995, leading all aspects of the national organization's work. He previously served as Executive Director of the Connecticut Association for Human Services and Managing Attorney for Connecticut Legal Services. His areas of expertise include:

- Infants and toddlers
- Strategic thinking
- Advocacy and policy strategies

## **Consultants**

**Harriet Dichter** provides strategic, organizational and project management services to federal, state and local governments; national, state and local non-profit policy and service organizations; and foundations. With strong policy, analysis, planning, implementation and advocacy experience she works effectively with all stakeholders in the system, including government, foundations, national organizations, teachers and administrators, families, business leaders, providers, and advocates. She brings deep engagement, responsiveness and effectiveness in conceptualizing and executing reforms, innovation and public-private partnerships focused on the needs of young children and their families. Areas of expertise include:

- Governance
- Continuum of early learning systems/services such as Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS), Pre-K, child care assistance, workforce ranging from funding, policy, implementation
- Advocacy and organizing strategies
- Financing and sustaining systems/programs for children and families;
- Public policy and program design and implementation
- Public-Private Partnerships
- Strategic thinking

**Louise Stoney** is an independent consultant specializing in early care and education policy and finance. She has consulted with policy makers, national organizations, academics, foundations and advocates in 38 states. Louise has written extensively and also co-founded the Alliance for Early Childhood Finance (to deepen understanding an exploration of ECE finance) and Opportunities Exchange (to foster Shared Service Alliances within early care and education). Areas of expertise include

- Early Care and Education (ECE) Finance and Sustainability
- ECE Cost-Modeling
- ECE Policy
- Shared Service Strategies
- QRIS finance, policy and implementation

**Karen W. Ponder** is an early childhood consultant who focuses her work on comprehensive state systems building. She is the former President and CEO of the North Carolina Partnership for Children, Inc. She helped to create Smart Start and administered it at the state level and oversaw community partnerships in all 100 NC counties for 15 years. She helped to develop North Carolina's pre-kindergarten plan and served on a state advisory panel to launch More at Four (now NC PreK). Karen has been involved in all aspects of early care and education, as a teacher, center director, board member, teacher educator and government policy maker. Areas of expertise include:

- Comprehensive early childhood state systems
- Local early childhood systems
- Building and sustaining coalitions
- Public-private partnerships
- Building political will and advocacy

**Marci McCoy-Roth** is a partner with True North Group, a policy and communications firm working to improve outcomes for vulnerable populations, primarily young children, adolescents, and youth in foster care. Marci has led several policy and communication issue campaigns, and frequently provides trainings to non-profit organizations on developing and implementing strategic communication plans to advance policy change, with a particular emphasis on using social media. She has designed and implemented several social media campaigns for early childhood issues, most recently the Early Success #Bthru8 campaign, hosted by the Alliance. Before joining TNG, Marci was the Senior Public Policy and Communications Director at Child Trends where she led strategic communication efforts for sharing research and policy with diverse audiences. At Child Trends, she directed a communication contract for the Office of Adolescent Health, in the Health and Human Services Department. Marci has also worked as a research and policy analyst in state government, and has published articles on health and policy issues. Areas of expertise include:

- Media: using traditional and social media tools to share research and policy information
- Research translation for broader audiences (fact sheets, briefs)
- Message development
- Advocacy
- Early childhood research and policy
- Knowledge sharing